

HOUSE BILL 50
By Turner M

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 68, Chapter 8, relative to animal control in any county having a metropolitan form of government and a population in excess of five hundred thousand (500,000), according to the 2000 federal census or any subsequent federal census.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 68, Chapter 8, is amended by adding Sections 2 through 5 of this act as a new, appropriately designated part 2.

SECTION 2. (a)

(1) It is unlawful for any person to own, keep or harbor any dog or cat which has not been vaccinated against rabies as required by law.

(2)

(A) Evidence of such vaccination shall consist of a certificate bearing the owner's name and address, number of the vaccination tag issued, date of vaccination, date the dog or cat shall be revaccinated, description and sex of the dog or cat vaccinated, type and lot number of vaccine administered and the signature of the person administering the vaccine.

(B) The certificate shall be prepared in triplicate, the original shall be given to the owner, the first copy filed in the office of the local health department and the second copy retained by the person administering the vaccine.

(C) The rabies certificate form shall be provided by the state department of health or by a licensed veterinarian.

(3) All vaccinations shall be administered by or under the supervision of a veterinarian licensed by the state board of veterinary medical examiners to practice veterinary medicine in this state.

(b) All persons owning, keeping or harboring any dog or cat over three (3) months of age shall pay, on or before May 1 of each year, to the county trustee of any county to which this act applies, a registration fee established by the local legislative body for each dog or cat so owned, kept or harbored.

(c)

(1) The county trustee where the dog or cat is kept shall issue a registration certificate on receipt of the registration fee to the owner of the dog or cat, giving the owner's name, date issued, amount paid, description and sex of the dog or cat for which the registration is being issued, the registration tag number issued, the date the dog or cat was vaccinated and the type of vaccine used.

(2) The trustee shall deliver a metal registration tag bearing the serial number of the registration certificate and the year in which it was delivered.

(3) No dog or cat registration certificate shall be issued unless an unexpired certificate of rabies vaccination is exhibited.

(4) It is the duty of the owner of each dog or cat to attach the registration tag to the collar which shall be worn at all times by the dog or cat so registered, and in the event the registration tag is lost, the county trustee shall issue a duplicate tag for a fee of

twenty-five cents (25¢) and the duplicate tag shall be attached to the dog's or cat's collar and at all times be worn thereon.

(d)

(1) All fees for registration as provided herein shall be known as the "rabies control fund" and shall be disbursed by the county trustee in a manner prescribed by the county legislative body only for the payment of salaries of rabies control officers appointed by the local board of health, for the establishment and operation of animal control shelter, or for other expenses incidental to the enforcement of this act.

(2) Any funds remaining at the end of any fiscal year shall be carried over to the next fiscal year, and its expenditure authorized by the county legislative body only for the purpose of rabies control.

(e) It is a Class C misdemeanor punishable by fine only for any person to own, keep or harbor any dog or cat which has not been vaccinated or registered pursuant to the requirements of this act, or to permit any dog or dogs or cat or cats to run at large at any time not wearing a vaccination tag.

SECTION 3. (a) Any dog or cat found running at large may be seized by the proper health officers or by any peace officer and placed in an animal control shelter in the county to which this act applies.

(b)

(1) If the dog or cat is wearing a tag, the owner shall be notified by a postcard addressed to the owner's last-known mailing address to appear within five (5) days and redeem the owner's dog or cat by paying a fee established by the local legislative body or the dog or cat will be destroyed.

(2) If the dog or cat is not wearing a tag, the dog or cat shall be destroyed, unless legally claimed by the owner within two (2) days.

(c) No dog or cat shall be released in any event from the animal control shelter unless it has been vaccinated and a tag placed on its collar.

SECTION 4. This act shall not be held to prohibit transportation of dogs or cats through the state; provided, that the dogs or cats are securely confined or kept upon a leash during their transportation through the state.

SECTION 5. The provisions of this act shall only apply in counties having a metropolitan form of government and a population in excess of five hundred thousand (500,000), according to the 2000 federal census or any subsequent federal census.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect July 1, 2003, the public welfare requiring it.